

involving a total outlay of ₹ 23.08 crores, were submitted to the Ministry by the State Government of Karnataka in November, 2014;

(b) what is the present status of consideration by the Ministry; and

(c) when will the requisite approvals be accorded and the State Government advised in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Five projects for development of jog tourism, provision of road amenities at Malkhed and Bidar district, and rural tourism in Chitradurga and Vijayapura city involving a total outlay of ₹ 23.08 crores, were submitted to the Ministry by the State Government of Karnataka in November, 2014. However, no new projects were sanctioned under the Product Infrastructure Development of Destinations and Circuits (PIDDC) Scheme as funding under that scheme was not available.

(c) During the current financial year no funds have been allocated under the State Plan of PIDDC Scheme.

**Declaring Varanasi as holy city with special status**

1895. SHRI TARUN VIJAY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware and recognises the great ancient religious importance of Varanasi and if so, whether Government will consider to declare Varanasi as a holy city with a special status;

(b) whether Government is aware that great Tamil poet Subramania Bharati lived in Varanasi and that house is still intact; and

(c) whether Government would consider to declare the house of Bharati as national heritage and improve its ambience appropriately?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) to (c) Varanasi has been identified as one of the twelve pilgrimage cities under the new plan Scheme 'National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive' (PRASAD) launched in 2014-15 with an objective of beautifying, developing and improving amenities of important religious destinations for both domestic and foreign tourists.

As informed by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh, the house in which Tamil poet Subramania Bharati lived in Varanasi is presently inhabited.

Ministry of Tourism does not declare any property as national heritage.